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State Operation of Mines.

The experiment which begins in Indiana today of state operation of coal mines will be watched with keen interest throughout the country. While the experiment is not on a scale to make an appreciable difference in the total coal output, it will be a demonstration of the practicability of state operation which may have an important bearing on the future.

The surrounding circumstances are such that the test will be as to whether coal can be mined at all, not as to how cheaply it can be mined. As a matter of fact, any coal produced by the two mines Gov. McCray has taken over is likely to come so high as to make the most conscienceless profiteer look like a piker. According to press dispatches, 800 state troops are to guard the two mines, which are rated as having capacity to produce 18,000 tons a month. To produce 18,000 tons of coal a month would require the full-time employment of only about 200 miners, so that for every man engaged actually in the digging of coal four men would be required to guard him. That is calculated to make the "overhead" cost of production run up into pretty stiff figures.

The Indiana governor has appealed to miners who have been on strike to return to these mines and operate them under state auspices and state protection, but it is intimated that if the strikers fail to respond to the call other men will be found to take their places. As these new men would not likely be skilled miners, a larger number of them would be required to operate the mines to their full capacity, and costs would be still further enhanced.

On the whole, therefore, the Indiana undertaking is more interesting as an experiment than promising as a solution of the fuel problem. If state operation of the mines cannot be made a success the sooner that fact is determined the better. Failure now would be less serious in consequences than failure a few months hence.

Mr. Padgett's Patriotic Stand.

In yesterday's Star appeared this paragraph in the notice of the death at his residence in this city of Representative Padgett of Tennessee:

In the recent House fight over the naval appropriation bill Mr. Padgett attracted attention by standing firm against efforts to reduce the personnel of the Navy below the figure which the President and the department regarded as unwise. Although most members of his party voted to cut the enlisted force, Mr. Padgett opposed it, declaring his experience as former head of the naval committee convinced him the country could not afford to "go as low" as the framers of the bill had contemplated.

This action showed a fine sense of patriotism. "The gentleman from Tennessee would not play politics with such a subject. He was willing to give to a republican administration the benefit of convictions he had formed while serving in a high place under a democratic administration. What he had learned as chairman of the naval committee he put, as a minority member of the committee, at the service not so much of a republican administration as of the country.

In a word, Mr. Padgett put the Navy above politics. And that is where both the Navy and the Army belong. The national defense, the national safety, cannot properly be assessed from a party point of view for party purposes. The public interests demand that they be provided for in their relation to the general welfare.

During his twenty-two years in the House Mr. Padgett rendered many good services, but none better than this last, and by that he deserves to be and should be remembered. It stamped him as a man of high quality, who rose easily and naturally to high duty.

The old play "Ten Nights in a Barroom" is nothing like as thrilling as a presentation entitled "Ten Minutes in a Bootleg Automobile" could be made.

The Chicago Car Strike.

A 100 per cent walkout of traction employes occurred in Chicago Monday night. Tuesday morning every surface and elevated line was idle. Twenty-five thousand operatives had quit work simultaneously. They undoubtedly expected that their action would tie Chicago into a hard knot of confusion and delay and loss and that the people would immediately demand resumption of service through a grant of concessions by the companies. On the contrary, with a remarkable resilience Chicago adjusted itself and there was no knot. Thousands of motor vehicles, small cars, big cars and trucks, were pressed into service. "Lines" of them were organized. The people, knowing that the strike was at hand, started early to go to work, and though there was some confusion in the downtown district for a few hours, the average of business forces for promptness was as good as ever. In the evening the traffic moved back with even greater facility. Yesterday, the second day of the strike, with more transport equipment and better traffic rules, the people were moved to and from business still more efficiently. True, this service costs the people a little more than usual. Maybe they will not want to keep it up long, but meanwhile they are rather enjoying the joke on both the strikers and the car companies, for they have found a new independence.

One effect of this speedy adjustment is to bring the two sides quickly into a mood of agreement. The companies have announced their willingness to negotiate and the men have indicated a disposition to accept a wage cut, provided certain other conditions are conceded. A material factor in the hastening of this approach toward agreement is the proposition of the mayor to spend $30,000,000, which he has at his disposal for transportation purposes, in the purchase of municipal busses to be operated on fixed lines by the city. This may be done anyway, whatever the agreement.

There are two lessons in this Chicago situation. One is that the street railway strike is no longer certain to tie up the public and make it a party to the controversy by hampering its movements. The other is that the independent motor unit is menacing the fixed-line transport. This is the motor age and every large city has enough combustion engine vehicles available to move the people in their daily requirements. The only problem is to organize the facilities. Street railway lines of all levels, surface, subway and elevated, are affected by this public resource for emergencies, which may become a resource for daily service.

Alexander Graham Bell.

Washington mourns the death of Alexander Graham Bell because he had made this city his home for many years. But Mr. Bell was in the broadest sense an American citizen at large and through his contributions to scientific developments a universal benefactor, so that his passing is an occasion of general bereavement.

It is difficult to estimate the full value of Alexander Graham Bell's chief invention, that of the telephone. So fully has it entered into the daily lives of the people, so intimately is it a part of the business of the world today, that it is rated as a commonplace. Yet well within the memory of many now living the telephone was a startling innovation, a novelty almost unbelievable. Within less than half a century the phone has developed from a "scientific toy" to an essential daily existence.

The story of Mr. Bell's experiments and indefatigable labors in the perfection of his device is highly romantic. He was inspired by faith in the principles which he sought to utilize in the development of an apparatus that would carry the human voice by means of an electric conductor just as Morse had worked out a few decades earlier a system of electric signals by wire to transmit messages. Singularly, there were those in the seventies who derided the possibility of vocal transmission and who looked, indeed, upon the telephone in its early demonstration as a fake, a trick. But skepticism soon yielded to proof.

Not even the inventor of the telephone foresaw the full possibilities of its development, to the point of crossing the continent with human speech. Nor today is it easy to look back to the first stage of the telephone and realize the lack of this facility. Mr. Bell's work on the telephone was not his sole scientific interest, however. He was an enthusiast on the subject of aviation and contributed valuably to the development of the airplane. Many other important achievements were scored by him. He was indeed one of the foremost men in the world of physical science during many years of active production.

Those who knew him well, including the great number of his fellow Washingtonians, were proud of friendship with this man of broad vision, unfailing kindliness and inspiring enthusiasm. Though he had reached the age of seventy-five, there was no reason to apprehend his passing, and his death is a distinct shock, which is softened only by the reflection that this life now ended was one of the most valuable in human history.

Pictures of the English royal family have been published with sufficient frequency to let the world know that they are fine-looking people, even if their influence in British politics is not overwhelming.

Trotsky assures Russia that Lenin is convalescent and in touch with affairs. As a writer of sick room bulletins Trotsky is more convincing than he was as an expounder of economic theories.

No democratic opposition to Senator Reed has yet found any method of relegating him to obscurity. The democratic mule appears now and then to have a certain secret admiration for a good balker.

The operatives and wage earners, as well as the general public, need active railways and coal mines in their business.

End of the Longest Day.

Some senatorial composer will perhaps write a song entitled "The End of the Longest Day" in celebration of the close of the most protracted formal session of the upper house of Congress recorded in history. Maybe the strains of that composition will resound through the years to come. Yesterday came the end of April 20. The calendar, it is true, said August 2, but the Congressional Record said April 20, and that settled it. For it was on the 20th of April when the chaplain of the Senate made his last prayer, and the Senate, like the House, goes on the ratio of one prayer a day. This was not because the chaplain was not on the job, but because the job had sidestepped him. For on the 20th of April the leaders on the republican side concluded that the only way to get the tariff bill passed before frost was to hold the Senate in continuous "legislative" session. As a practical matter that is supposed to facilitate legislation because it cuts off the morning hour and in theory eliminates all other business but the bill in hand. In actual practice, however, it does nothing of the sort, because miscellaneous business is still transacted, the bill in hand is laid out of hand from time to time and meanwhile the debate proceeds without limits of time or of subject. Yesterday's adjournment, the first in 104 calendar days, or 2,475 hours, was taken because of the death of a member of the Senate. It is the usual thing for a bereaved legislative chamber to adjourn upon learning of the death of a member. But undoubtedly if it had not been that an agreement to take a vote on the tariff bill on an early fixed date was about to be reached the Senate yesterday would have changed the time-honored formula and merely taken a recess in respect to the departed senator. So the legislative day of April 20 passes into history, the longest on record, and, save for a few bits of legislative miscellany and the essential appropriation bills, in proportion to its length the least productive.

A Probable Conference.

In ten days the House reassembles and then both wheels of the legislative mill on Capitol Hill will be turning. How long will they continue to turn? A joint conference of House and Senate will probably be necessary to decide the question.

The campaign and election day are in everybody's mind and calculation. Success at the polls in November overshadows every other consideration. Candidates for seats in the next Congress want to win.

Many nominations have been made and campaigns are in progress. Some of the most important, however, will not be made until next month. The two leading parties in New York will not make their pronouncements until near October 1.

The congressional card is in a state of confusion. Some items are in process of treatment. Others have yet to be taken up. All could not possibly be disposed of in a month and a half, and Congress sitting through October is not at present among the suggestions.

Which items, therefore, should be marked "must"? Which should be postponed until the short session or left as a legacy to the next Congress.

A conference with these questions before it will have business of so much importance to transact its session or sessions will for the time monopolize the spotlight.

A motion picture promoter proposes a laugh week as a national institution. Some resolute reformer is likely to take the idea up and make it compulsory for people to laugh whether they feel like it or not. Give the people something to laugh at and they will laugh—unless they are too polite.

A New York musical comedy producer reports that he won $50,000 at Monte Carlo. The musical comedy manager has to be lucky these days in order to meet the expense of high-priced productions.

The discussion of seniority rights is one involving ethical considerations which may require more time for settlement than is available, when the public is interested, first of all, in coal and transportation.

Having put his views before the public, Conan Doyle appears content to let the scientists take the matter up and argue it out among themselves.

The fact that the present value of German marks compels an official to collect his salary in bales illustrates the advantage of quality as opposed to quantity.

Reports that pictures of prominent politicians are sometimes "boo'ed" in the motion picture theaters may lead Film Overseer Will Hays to call for an investigation of the ushers.

John Barleycorn has always figured more or less actively in politics, and although down and out is still hoping for a favorable turn of fortune in the balloting.

SHOOTING STARS.

BY PHILANDER JOHNSON.

The Altruist Anthem.

Oh, let's be good and let's be kind—
We sing the song again
Let's all be gentle and refined
Unto our fellow-men—
How often has the song been sung
In every sort of key,
In every land and every tongue,
In tones of grief or glee.

No doubt the cave man long ago
His mind would thus relax,
Before he laid a rival low
With his primeval ax.
They sang the chorus with great joy,
Disclaiming guile or greed,
That day the citizens of Troy
Brought out the wooden steed.

Today men strive for terror's sake
And darkest threats rehearse,
While laboratories seek to make
Each bad explosive worse.
And men against their fellow men
In factions are combined—
And yet we rise and sing again,
"Oh, let's be good and kind!"

Strategic Finance.

"I know a man who would be willing to contribute liberally to your campaign fund."

"Take him around to the opposition and let them convert him," said Senator Sorghum. "If we can roll up enough contributions for 'em maybe they'll get enough money to start a scandal and defeat themselves."

Jud Tunkins says what makes him doubt whether women have a sense of humor is the fact that they take the pictures in the fashion magazines so seriously.

Musings of a Motor Cop.

No longer is Hortense on view;
This way she does not pass.
The interest on her car is due—
She can't afford the gas.

Josh's System.

"Your boy Josh says he's going to be an aviator."

"That's what he tells his mother," replied Farmer Corntossel. "Josh's system of havin' an easy home life, with plenty to eat an' no chores required, is to keep his parents well worried."

"Speak gently," said Uncle Eben; "but when you try it on a mule it simply confuses him."

Here and There in Washington

BY "THE MAJOR."

DESPITE the hot summer days and the compelled attendance of senators at the lengthy sessions, due to the consideration of the tariff bill, numerous of the solons have appeared to be unmindful of the warm weather. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, republican leader, is one of the lawmakers who never appear flustered. He gives one the impression of having just had a nice cool bath and put on fresh linen. Senator Lodge, without doubt, wears the best looking shirts of any man in the United States Senate today.

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DURING the early days of golfing at the municipal links there were few left-handed golf players noticed. Within the last two or three months, however, numerous port-handers have made their appearance on the links and a goodly proportion of them play an excellent game. Touching upon the subject of left-handed individuals, did you ever stop and note that there are very few tonsorial artists who work with their left hand? The majority of those who do occupy end chairs, so as not to conflict with their fellow workers.

* * * *

THERE are numerous institutions and associations in the United States engaged in research work, but none of them has as yet been able to explain just why it is that the drivers of Ford cars always appear to be in a hurry. Notice it the next time you are driving.

* * * *

THE Speedway and the drives through Rock Creek Park afford much enjoyment to the motoring public. There should, however, be a rule, or if there is one it should be enforced, to confine instruction lessons to certain localities and hours. Neither of the pleasure spots should be used as a training ground for motorists during the time when people are out for an afternoon or evening spin. It might however be an excellent idea to set aside certain of the city's thoroughfares for instruction grounds and to compel those who desire licenses for driving cars to pass thorough and practical tests. Washington is becoming noted for its automobile accidents.

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THE latest thing in sports is the riding of surf boards by young men and women up and down portions of the Potomac river. Nearly every afternoon some speed boat or launch can be seen towing a young man or young woman standing on one of these aquatic toboggans. Some of the riders are quite expert, while others provide only comedy thrills.

* * * *

IF you happen to be up at the Capitol today, tomorrow or some other day and notice a senator busily engaged in figuring out something by means of a pad and pencil, you must not jump at the conclusion that he is working out his income tax or trying to see whether an ad valorem or a specific duty is needed on certain articles in the tariff schedule. The chances are one hundred to one that he is figuring out his chances on getting back at the coming election.

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A MAN breezed into my sanctum sanctorum the other day with a kick against the railroads. He was traveling to New York on a hot day and, like numerous of the men in the chair car, had removed his coat for comfort, and, like the others, he had on a very presentable and clean shirt, wore no suspenders, his trousers being held in place by a belt, and while he did not enjoy all the comforts of a cool costume such as the ladies in the car wore, low necks and short sleeves, he was far more comfortable and quite as modestly garbed as if he had worn his coat. When he visited that always in summer hot place the diner, the steward advised him that it was against the rules of the railroad company for a man to appear sans coat. Several ladies kindly volunteered the information that they saw nothing objectionable if he ate without being made uncomfortable by a hot coat. The steward was firm and the traveler had to retrace his steps through five cars, get and put on his coat or else go without luncheon. Odd, isn't it, you can sit in one part of the train without your coat during a sweltering hot day, but in another part you must wear it!

EDITORIAL DIGEST

Coal Distribution Plans Generally Are Approved.

"Good, so far as it goes," to quote the Brooklyn Eagle, is the verdict of most newspapers on the action of the administration in assuming control of the distribution of coal. That some positive step has become necessary is generally recognized, and the Interstate Commerce Commission's priority order, the New York Globe thinks, will "strike the average man as the least the government could do in the present emergency."

But objection is raised that it is only a palliative which does not affect the issue. Indeed, as some writers view it, such governmental action makes the fundamental problem even more difficult to meet, by producing a temporary sense of security which will increase the tendency to drift without bringing both the rail and the coal strike to a definite head.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer sees in the commission's action "an open admission that the coal reserves that were expected to tide the country over the strike, however protracted it might prove, are now near to exhaustion and that the coal currently produced would be inadequate the nation's needs even if it could be moved with the greatest facility." The Boston Traveler takes a more cheerful view. The emergency measure does not mean, in its opinion, 'that the nation is in desperate straits, but rather that the federal authorities do not intend conditions to become any worse than may be necessary."

From a similar viewpoint, the Newark News thinks the government is merely "taking the bull by the horns," and that it finds in "the emergency car priority routing powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission" adequate means of accomplishing an equitable distribution "without a stretching of statute or reliance on dubious 'implied' powers of government" is a matter which the Newark paper finds "satisfying." The source of the power which the government is now to exercise is the transportation act of 1920, which, as the Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph summarizes it, expressly authorizes the Interstate Commerce Commission "'when in its opinion shortage of equipment, congestion of traffic or other emergency exists' to act summarily in prescribing routes, and at all times it is given 'extensive jurisdiction' over the 'use, control, supply, movement and distribution' of cars and locomotives."

"Self-defense," the St. Paul Dispatch declares, "includes the right to take the offensive if necessary," and the "war measure" to which the government now resorts "is an act of self-defense on behalf of the people of the United States."

While governmental control, in the view of the Cincinnati Enquirer, "is a step that no one cared to see repeated," the emergency is such that the measure is justified, for, as the Richmond Times-Dispatch says, "under the most favorable conditions a coal famine may be avoided only by a temporary centralization of control." Moreover, the service of cars to the mines should, the New Orleans Times-Picayune believes, "afford the coal mines now working a fair opportunity to reach maximum production," and thus increase the supply available for distribution.

Then the opportunity for control of profiteering which government regulation affords is looked upon by many writers as in itself justifying interference. "That the adoption of some such measure was immediately urgent," the Indianapolis News says, "is evident from the course prices have taken within the last day or two. In some cases they have doubled and more, and under the stimulus of wild bidding would probably far exceed the highest war figures if unrestrained." But "if the government is sincere and carries out its program," the Scranton Times is confident "that it can absolutely prevent extortion in prices." And following such checking of exorbitant prices, the Pittsburgh Leader hazards the guess that "possibly when those who have built their hopes upon a big clean-up through profiteering through the fall and winter see their plans go glimmering, they may find the path toward an adjustment of the wage dispute smooth and well lighted.

But however effective the remedial measures of the administration may be, they are, the Baltimore Sun points out, "merely designed to control one symptom of a serious disorder," and, as the Buffalo News says, "they will not aid in adjusting the situation." Indeed, the Grand Rapids Press fears that "such schemes to alleviate the effect of the strike upon the consuming public may only prolong it and aggravate the differences and the bitterness." The Columbia (S. C.) State agrees that the administration's action may well serve to increase bitterness, since, in effect, it is "equivalent to arraying the government against the striking miners," for when "through the Interstate Commerce Commission the government lends its tremendous powers to conserving and rationing" the available coal supply "indirectly it renders aid to the mine operators refusing to make concessions to the miners."

Anent Apple Pie.

Is the apple pie to disappear from the breakfast, dinner and supper table of the Bay state farmer? Perish the thought. One lone woman has ventured to arise in meeting and advise her sisters—the rural housewives of the commonwealth—to abstain henceforth from making apple pies, because, forsooth, they can use the time and energy consumed in pie-making for nobler ends. This most venturesome of women declared she had actually tried it and had found the thing could be put over.

Now, it is probably a fact that the making and eating of apple pie has been a little bit overdone. Some housewives have toiled and slaved beyond all reason in the effort to provide enormous quantities of the delectable vivand to gluttonous man folks. Men should be trained to moderation. It will be better for their digestion, better for the atmosphere of the home, because it will enable wives to live longer and keep their dispositions in better order.

But let no one hint that apple pie be stricken from the New England bill of fare completely. Even reformers should be reasonable.

But our tip to husbands is not to neglect the compliments to ma's apple pies. Those will fetch her.—Boston Traveler.

The Day of the Bicycle.

The bicycle is returning. It may never regain all the popularity it once enjoyed. As a means of leisurely quiet traveling it has no equal. After the speed craze of the automobile's formative years has subsided we may expect the bicycle to return to claim a portion of its old place in the human affections.

Touring on wheel was once a very general sport. Indeed, it was the bicycle that inaugurated the campaign for good roads and hard-surfaced roads. The public highways of the country swarmed with wheels. Local, state and national organizations of riders, aided by the manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of wheels, set up a mighty demand for the improvement of roads. The present day good roads booster, whether an individual or an organization; the automobile or the makers of automobiles may be inclined to look upon our good roads as their achievement. They are only reaping the harvest that the bicycle sowed many years ago.

It is proper and altogether fitting now that the wheel should return to enjoy some of the benefits of the concrete highways.—Springfield Illinois State Journal.

Injunction for Wives.

Now, why have not the women with husbands of too gregarious tastes thought before of the remedy found by the wife of a Chicago man, who has been restrained by a court order from "visiting, seeing, talking to or riding with any woman" but his wife? This is a pretty comprehensive injunction and ought to keep peace in the family if anything will in a household where court orders are necessary.

There are embarrassments ahead for this Chicago man, but doubtless he has brought punishment on himself. His wife says so. He has, to be sure, what some may regard as a mitigation of his sentence in the fact that the court issued another injunction, this one forbidding his mother-in-law from visiting his house or interfering with his affairs. But the fact remains that if any lady wishes to put a check on the volatility of her husband and can find a complaisant magistrate, there could hardly be a more effective way. Whether or not it would tend to increase domestic happiness is another matter. —Indianapolis Star.

Wish we could return to the peaceful war days again.—Lansing State Journal.

"Always look up," says John Wanamaker, who is eighty-four, and doesn't care what the women wear.—Nashville Tennessean.

The worst villain in the movies sticks gum under the seats.—Flint Journal.

A hotel room at a summer resort would be much like your room at home if it were ten degrees cooler.—Memphis News-Similar.

It may not be considered an unfriendly act if John Bull heaps coals of fire on Uncle Sam's head.—Vancouver Province.

Take them all in all, big and large, about the best paragrapher of ancient or modern times was a Jew named Solomon.—Nashville Banner.

The easiest way to be reconciled to age is to observe a few young simpletons trying to act smart.—Atlanta Constitution.

A lot of men who think they are broadminded are simply too shallow-minded to afford anchorage for an opinion.—Akron Beacon-Journal.